

CONSIDER USING GENERIC DRUGS AND SAVING

Prescription medications come either as brand-name or generic. When a medication initially becomes available it is given a brand-name status. Brand status means the company that created the medicine is the only company that has the legal right to manufacture it for a specific period of time. But once the time period has expired, other companies may make the same medication. When other companies start to manufacture the drug, it is known as a generic, and generics often are sold at a great discount from brand-name drugs. An estimated half of all prescriptions in the US are filled with generic drugs, and generics account for fully half of all drugs produced. Generic drugs approved by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provide all the medicinal benefits of their brand-named counterparts. The generic must have identical active ingredients, dosage, safety, strength, delivery method, absorption, performance, and intended use. Here are three examples of famous brand-named drugs that have gone on to become common generics:

- A. Zantac's generic equivalent is ranitidine
- B. Prozac's generic equivalent is fluoxetine
- C. Valium's generic equivalent is diazepam

When your doctor is about to write a prescription for you, consider asking the following questions:

- Is a generic drug equivalent available? If your doctor believes a generic is appropriate, ask the doctor to write this on the prescription.
- Are there any special instructions I should know about before taking this drug?

Generic drugs are constantly entering the market, so it is important to regularly review your current prescription medications and ask your doctor if a new generic will meet your needs.

Generic Drug Fast Facts

- By asking your doctor for generics (when available) you are saving without compromising on quality or effectiveness.
- Generic equivalent medications contain the same active ingredients and meet the same standards as their brand-named counterparts.
- Generic drugs generally cost 30-50% less than their equivalent brand-name products.
- Many of the available generic drugs are made by the same major drug companies that produced the brand-named drugs.

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